

Harmony and Benevolence

by [Armando Simón](#) (January 2025)



Café in Davos (Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, 1928)

As usual, the writers' meeting took place at a café. There, they would read their works, whether a poem, a short story, or a single chapter of a novel that a person was working on. They met at a time and day of the week when the café had few customers so they could enjoy a large alcove off to the side of the main area.

Jane had just finished reading a chapter from her novel having a magical fantasy setting and plot. Comments had made the

rounds, as usual.

This was followed by a humorous short story from John. His stories were always eagerly anticipated.

Afterwards, Kimberly, a plump woman, said she would read a poem, which went as follows:

Harmony and Benevolence

So sad to see strife
Among good neighbors turned enemies.
Hate has replaced Harmony
While Fear has replaced Friendship.

I yearn for those years when
Love and respect were omnipresent when
Helping each other hadn't been replaced by Hate.

Friends, let's return to love and laughter,
With affection not frowns on our faces!
Let us shake hands and begin the healing!
Let's embrace once more as brothers!

"Oh, that's really beautiful," murmured Jane.

"Yes, Kim," John agreed, "it is. It's very nice. And nice rhythm."

"Kimberly!" Lydia exclaimed. A very pale girl with glasses, she was in the habit of always beginning her feedback by exclaiming the author's name. "I think this is the best thing you've written so far! Really! I do!"

"It's what this country needs to hear, with so much divisiveness in the country," Paul chimed in, an older man wearing a t-shirt emblazoned with a Pride flag. "It didn't use

to be this bad. I wish this could be seen on every billboard, every newspaper, and on the internet."

"Well, I wrote this cause we're at a critical junction in our history. Nothing that Donald Trump says should be put in print—it's all hate! And every journalist that has a chance to interview him should come out and right away attack him and his racist, misogynistic, lying crap!"

"My blood boils every time I see his face on TV or the internet," confessed Jane. "Trump's Hitler!"

"That's right. He's Hitler!" Kimberly agreed.

"And Reagan! Reagan was Hitler!" Paul joined in.

"That's right, Reagan! He was Hitler too," Jane agreed.

"If that man ever gets back in the White House, it's going to be the end of Our Democracy, no doubt about it!" John warned. "It'll be the Fourth Reich! Colorado and Massachusetts had the right idea, removing Trump's name from the ballot so nobody could vote for him and our Democracy could be saved."

"Yeah," said Jacob, who had been silent all this time. "And then the Supreme Court had to step in and kill it. The Supreme Court has *got* to be reformed."

"And you'd *think* that no one would vote for a convicted felon, but no!" said Lydia. "I myself had hoped that the judge's fine of \$500 million he gave to Trump for the crime of borrowing money from a bank and paying it back would have bankrupted him, but then he got all those donations from people ... How, how much was it?"

"52 million! In small donations!" said Jane. "52 million dollars!"

"—The MAGA Republicans are the worst," John interrupted, "with their stupid little red caps, those Nazis!"

"And the problem is," Lydia pointed out in a calmer voice, "is that millions voted for that man, and what are we going to do with them once he is out of the way? I guess we'll have to round them up, and put them some place, and deprogram them."

"My history teacher—his name is Lars Maischak—wants all Republicans executed, especially Trump. He wants to solicit funds to erect a statue to the guy that almost killed Trump. He says that that guy was a role model."

"Ok, people, OK," Jacob said, smiling. "Ok, now, once again we've gotten way off the subject. Calm down, now." He chuckled. "I still haven't read my stuff. And Lydia, I know, wants to get to her chapter." Everyone echoed his chuckle, a little embarrassed they got carried away. "Lydia, why don't you go first?"

Lydia gathered her papers and began reading.

"Ah ... Paul was next."

"Whoops, that's right. Paul, you ready?"

"Yeah." Paul began reading a short story he wrote, about two gay men meeting, taking a liking to each other, whereupon they went to one of the men's homes to have sex. He described in detail their synchronous, mutual fellatio in the bedroom. It conjured the image of a human seesaw on the bed.

A little over an hour later, the group ended, and everyone said their goodbyes and went their separate ways. It was late afternoon, almost time for an early dinner.

Kimberly rode towards home. On her way, she passed several buildings and malls. At one point, she saw a group of people in front of a very small building which, among other things, offered to perform abortions. Although not shouting or making a scene, from the signs they held and from the fact that most

were silently praying, it was evident that they were a Pro-Life group. Kimberly slowed down as she rolled down the window and thrust a middle finger up in the air in their direction while at the same time yelling obscenities at them.

Then, she continued on her way.

Parking her car at the driveway, she got out and headed towards the door and entered the home.

There was a vertical sign she kept in front of the door which expressed her philosophy and was a very popular sign, found in front of many homes. In colorful rainbow words, it read:

In this house we believe:

Women's rights are human rights.

Kindness is everything.

Trans lives matter.

Black lives matter.

Climate change is real.

Undocumented immigrants are welcome.

Hate has no home here.

[Table of Contents](#)

Armando Simón is the author of [*Very Peculiar Stories*](#) and [*Fables From the Americas*](#).

Follow NER on Twitter [@NERIconoclast](#)